Garment for women.

Technical Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a women's garment, of the type that comprises a front piece and a back piece, which together form a body-enclosing casing, in which at least four openings are included, namely a neck opening, two arm-holes and at least one lower opening, the front piece being composed of a top piece and a bottom piece, as well as including a transverse, slit-like access opening, which is delimited by, on one hand, an upper edge of the bottom piece, and on the other hand a lower edge of the top piece, the bottom piece being formed with a tab, which is fastened or the inside of the top piece and which separates two recesses for the housing of breasts.

Background of the Invention

Breastfeeding and breast milk production are affected by psychological, physiological, hormonal and sociocultural factors, which may vary most considerably from individual to individual. One such a factor of psychological character is that some women become embarrassed of exposing the breasts for outsiders. Therefore, breastfeeding is avoided in many situations in spite of the child needing milk. In physiological respect, breasts heavy with milk are sensible organs, which easily may be affected detrimentally during unfavourable circumstances. For instance, galactostasis may arise if the breasts are exposed to coldness, draught and erroneous pressure. Another phenomenon, namely so-called sympathy leakage, may arise if the breast, which during breastfeeding via one of the breasts should not lactate milk, is subjected to an outer pressure, because an expulsion reflex may arise in the extraordinarily fine mechanisms that control the milk secretion in spite of the child not sucking on the breast in question. Such sympathy leakage may, among other things, lead to the woman's clothes being soiled. Other circumstances, which frequently are experienced as annoying, are the feeling that the inactive

breast is not kept steadily in place in connection with the active breast being exposed to the child, as well as feelings of embarrassment if the inactive breast is entirely or partly laid bare. In order to overcome these drawbacks brassières have been developed having separately openable breast cups. If the woman wears such a brassière, the inactive breast may be held steadily in place at the same time as the second breast - after opening of the cup - is exposed to breastfeeding. By the fact that the brassière also after opening of a cup partially surrounds the peripherical area of the breast, such brassières also give a feeling of steadiness for the active breast.

Prior Art

It is previously known to make clothes that are especially intended for breastfeeding women, and which aim at facilitating breastfeeding and simultaneously enabling proper clothing. Thus, by SE 0000589-2, a women's garment is previously known of the type initially mentioned. This known garment, which may consist of a sweater or a dress, is distinguished by being formed with a horizontal access opening formed in bust height, the two garment sections that define the opening being clinging and manufactured from an elastic material, more precisely with the purpose of holding the bust warm. Said access opening, which also is denominated overlap opening, has been provided by a top piece included in the front piece of the garment having been brought to cover, at the bottom, the outside of an upper portion of a bottom piece. In this connection, the lower edge of the top piece as well as the upper edge of the bottom piece are straight and extend between vertical side seams, which unite the front and back pieces of the garment.

Although the above-mentioned garment per se facilitates the taking out and the exposure of the breasts by comparison with conventional garments without access opening, the same is associated with a plurality of drawbacks. One such drawback manifests itself in that the garment by

itself does not contribute to giving steadiness to the breasts. Therefore, if the garment is worn without a so-called nursing bra suitable for the purpose, in particular the big-bosomed woman may experience that the inactive breast lacks steadiness. Furthermore, the known garment requires the top piece as well as the bottom piece in the front piece of the garment to be manufactured from an elastic material for the bust to hold the warmth. However, many times it is desirable to manufacture garments from non-elastic materials, e.g., cotton for summer use. Furthermore, cold air may find it's way into the passage between the breasts in connection with one of the same being taken out for breastfeeding. Sympathy leakage may also take place.

Objects and Features of the Invention

The present invention aims at obviating the above-mentioned drawbacks of the previously known garment and at providing an improved garment for breastfeeding women. Therefore, a primary object of the invention is to provide a garment, which regardless if the user wears brassière or not, gives steadiness to the inactive breast in connection with breastfeeding. An additional object is to provide a garment that counteracts penetration of cold air into the area between the breasts; all with the outermost object to counteract galactostasis. It is also an object to provide a garment the design of which gives certain steadiness to the active breast. Furthermore, the garment should be possible to be worn in a convenient and comfortable way. Yet an object of the invention is to provide a garment that can be manufactured from most shifting cloths or textile materials, i.e., also non-elastic such. Furthermore, the garment should be possible to be realized in many different embodiments, e.g., in the form of sweaters, blouses, dresses, suit jackets, overalls, swimsuits, etc.

According to the invention, at least the primary object is attained by the features defined in the charac-

terizing clause of claim 1. Preferred embodiments of the invention are furthermore defined in the dependent claims.

Additional Elucidation of Prior Art

By US 4 528 699, a garment is previously known intended for breastfeeding women, which garment includes a top piece hanging in two shoulder straps, as well as a bottom piece, the upper edge portion of which externally is covered by the top piece. However, in this case the bottom piece, and not the top piece, is partially pulled away in connection with exposure of a breast for breastfeeding.

Brief Description of the Appended Drawings

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view obliquely from the front/from above of a garment according to the invention,

Fig. 2 is a perspective view obliquely from behind/from below of the same garment,

Fig. 3 is a perspective view corresponding to fig. 1 showing a top piece included in the garment partly pulled-up in order to expose a breast,

Fig. 4 is a front view of the garment in a spread-out, "tailor-flat" state,

Fig. 5 is an analogous view showing the garment from behind,

Fig. 6 is a planar view that from behind shows the inside of the front piece of the garment,

Fig. 7 is a planar view of a bottom piece included in the front piece according to fig. 6, and

Fig. 8 is an analogous planar view showing a top piece, which belongs to the bottom piece according to fig. 7.

Detailed Description of a Preferred Embodiment of the Invention

The garment shown in the drawings, which is exemplified in the form of a sweater, comprises a front piece gen-

erally designated 1, and a back piece 2, which together form a broadcloth or casing, which may enclose a woman's upper part of the body. In this casing, four openings are included, namely a neck opening 3, two armholes 4 as well as a lower opening 5. In the example, the garment is assumed to be made by the fact that separate front and back pieces 1, 2 are sawn together along longitudinal side seams 6 and shoulder seams 7, besides which separate sleeves 8 are sawn up along sleeve seams 9. However, the invention is in no way limited to this manufacturing method. Thus, the sleeves 8, for instance, could be spared. Furthermore, the garment may be manufactured with front and back pieces, which do not require needlework in order to together form a body-enclosing casing.

In figs. 6-8, only the front piece 1 of the garment is shown, more precisely without sleeves 8. In the same way as in the garment according to SE 0000589-2, said front piece includes a top piece 10 as well as a bottom piece 11. The lower edge of the top piece 10 is designated 12, while the upper edge of the bottom piece 11 generally is designated 13. In the corresponding top and bottom pieces in the garment according to SE 00000589-2, not only the lower edge of the top piece, but also the upper edge of the bottom piece is straight and mutually parallel, the lower portion of the top piece being kept pressed against the outside of the upper edge portion of the bottom piece by means of the side seams of the garment.

It should now be emphasized that the front piece 1 is shown from behind or from the inside in fig. 6. This is marked by the inside of the bottom piece having been shaded.

In contrast to the garment according to SE 0000589-2, the garment according to the invention includes a tab designated 14, which is fastened on the inside of the top piece 10, more precisely at a point that is designated 15. Although it is feasible per se to locate the same fastening point 15 on a level below the neckband 16, the same is most

preferably located in close vicinity of the band, as is shown in fig. 6.

In fig. 7, it is shown how the tab 14 has a tapering shape in the direction from the limiting edge 13 to the free end of the tab, more precisely by being delimited by two arched edges 17. At the bottom, said limiting edges 17 transform into two additional arched limiting edges 18. The arc radius of these latter limiting edges is smaller than the arc radius of the limiting edges 17. In such a way, two softly rounded recesses 19 are formed, which closely connect to the shape of female breasts.

In fig. 6, L designates a reference line that marks the level of the lower edge 12 of the top piece 10. The vertical distance between the same reference line L and the neckband 16 is designated A1, while the distance between the line L and the upper edge of the bottom piece, such as this is constituted by the bottoms of the rounded recesses, is designated A2. In practice, the measure A2 should be within the range of 2-10 cm, suitably 3-8 cm. The measure A1 varies per se depending on the size of the garment in question, but the relation A1/A2 should be within the range of 2-4:1, and suitably amount to approx. 3:1.

By the existence of the described tab, it is guaranteed that the inactive breast of the user during breast-feeding is kept steadily in place, in particular when a separate brassière is lacking. Exposure of the desired breast can be carried out by the simple measure of somewhat pulling up one half of the top piece 10, as is outlined in fig. 3. After such pulling-up, the skin between the breasts is covered by the tab 14. By the fact that the upper end of the tab is fastened adjacent to the neckband 16, in particular the part of the garment not pulled-up is kept properly against the body. By comparison with the garment according to SE 0000589-2, the garment according to the invention gives an improved support as a consequence of the fact that the upper edge of the bottom piece may be pulled up somewhat on the breast, the tab supporting and lifting the breasts. The breasts also get support from the lower

edge of the top piece below the inactive breast by the fact that the top piece is pulled up over the breastfeeding breast, a substantial advantage of the garment according to the invention being that the décolletage goes up a distance along the lower edge of the breast. This is made on the inactive breast if it is wanted to lay the breastfeeding breast from the lower edge of the top piece. Another important advantage of the garment according to the invention is that the same does not cause erroneous pressure on the breasts in the way that the known garment may. In the last-mentioned case, the upper edge of the bottom piece should be pulled down below the breast that should be breast-feeding. This makes that the upper edge of the bottom piece causes a pressure on the inactive breast, at least if the inactive breast should be held covered and warm, the upper edge of the bottom piece being pulled down below the breastfeeding breast and pressing on the mammary glands of the inactive breast. This may give rise to galactostasis.

It is of course feasible to modify the shaping and fashion-wise design of the garment within limits, which solely are determined by the subsequent claims.